**How to Reap the Health Benefits of Wine**

For years now, red wine has been touted for its health benefits. It increases good choleterol (HDL), which helps decrease bad choleterol (LDL), and even more importantly, it discourages the formation of clots that can close off arteries and cause heart attacks or strokes. (Szmitko and Verma)

Red wine contains polyphenl s, which are the antioxidants that may reduce the risk of cardiovascular disease and cancer as well as reduce the onset of Alzheimer’s disease.

But what about white wine? An article written by Dr. Thomas Stuttaford for the Healthspan web site says that red wine is better for you.

“The advantages of red wine over white, stems both from the way it is made (the skin in red wine plays a more important role in its preparation), where the grapes are grown - a warm but damp climate is necessary to nurture them so that the resulting red wine is cardio-protective - and by the process of manufacture. The healthiest wine is a comparatively new one that has been made by an old-fashioned process. Any attempt to hurry the development of a wine by prematurely ageing it removes some of its medicinal value.”

French researchers at the University of Montpellier, however, say that they have created a white wine that has the same benefits as red. Led by Pierre-Louis Teissedre, the researchers used white grapes that were rich in polyphenl s and their wine-making process was more like that for red wine, including heating the mixture to higher levels than normal. The end result, claim the researchers, was a Chardonnay which had polyphenl levels four times higher than normal. ("New White Wine 'Good for Heart'")

In addition, researchers at the University of Connecticut School of Medicine and colleagues from the University of Milan say their research indicates that the flesh of the grape, used to make white wine, provides value, too.

"Although further study is needed to identify the principle ingredients responsible for the cardio protective abilities of the grape flesh, to the best of our knowledge, our study provides evidence for the first time that the flesh of grapes is equally cardio protective with respect to the skins," the researchers report.("Red Wine and White Wine May Be Equally Good for the Heart")

Since red and white wines are both good for you, how much should we drink? Five ounces is generally considered to be one serving. In its 2005 Dietary Guidelines for Americans, the U.S. Department of Agriculture recommended one drink a day for women and two drinks a day for men. The USDA makes it clear that moderation is key.

“The hazards of heavy alcohol consumption are well known and include increased risk of liver cirrhosis, hypertension, cancers of the upper gastrointestinal tract, injury, violence, and death. Moreover, certain individuals who are more susceptible to the harmful effects of alcohol should not drink at all.” (USDA)

Arthur Agatston, MD, cardiologist and creator of the popular South Beach diet, encourages patients who drink alcohol to do so with a meal. "Alcohol can stimulate the appetite so it is better to drink it with food. When alcohol is mixed with food, it can slow the stomach's emptying time and potentially decrease the amount of food consumed at the meal." (Zelman)

When drinking wine for health benefits, whether it is white or red, it is important to remember that moderation is the key. It is well known that alcohol abuse can lead to numerous health problems. So, if you want to drink alcohol for its health benefits, experts agree that the best way to enjoy wine is sensibly—have a glass or two of your favorite wine with a meal.

# Works Cited

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